

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 98-651

October 15, 1998

MAINE PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY
Request for Approval of Sample
Unbundled Bills and a Waiver of
Chapter 309 § 2 and §5(B)(2)

ORDER OF APPROVAL

I. Summary

On August 18, 1998, Maine Public Service Company (MPS) filed a request for approval of proposed sample unbundled bills pursuant to Chapter 309 § 4, as well as a waiver request from the requirements of Chapter 309 § 2 for all bills and § 5(B)(2) for Rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes. In this Order, the Director of the Consumer Assistance Division approves the bill formats, grants the waiver request from the requirement of Chapter 309 § 5(B)(2) for all bills, and denies the request for a waiver from the requirements of Chapter 309 § 2 for Rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes.

II. Description of MPS's Request

MPS submitted five sample bills for review and approval of the bill's format:

- 1) residential account;
- 2) residential account with usage below 100 kWh;
- 3) commercial rate C account;
- 4) unmetered, flat-rate accounts (e.g. area lighting and street light bills); and
- 5) demand customer account.

MPS requested a waiver of Chapter 309 § 2 for rate C customer bills containing prorated rate changes. According to MPS, rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes cannot be unbundled because the customer charge is hard coded into the program that actually prints the bill and cannot be adjusted for any proration. MPS has indicated, however, that while it cannot unbundle the "rates" for supply and delivery services for rate C customer prorated bills, it can unbundle the charges for supply service and delivery service.

MPS also requested a waiver of Chapter 309 § 5(B)(2) for all of its bills. According to MPS, a waiver of Chapter 309 § 5(B)(2) is needed because there is not enough space on its bill to locate the informational statement and other information that

is required by Commission rule or order (i.e. late payment fees statement). MPS submitted sample bills which demonstrated the lack of available space on the bill to locate the informational statement and other customer messages that are required to be on the bill. MPS has proposed to locate the informational message on a separate insert with every bill issued from January 1, 1999 through February 29, 2000 and display a bolded message on the bill itself directing the customer to the insert for more information on the unbundled charges. The insert will contain the informational statement required by Chapter 309 § 5(A)(2) enclosed by a border and will not contain any other information.

Pursuant to section 7 of Chapter 309 of the Commission's rules, the Director of the Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) may grant waiver requests, provided that "good cause" exists for granting the waiver and the waiver is consistent with the intent of the rule.

MPS has demonstrated "good cause" for requesting a waiver of § 5(B)(2) for all its bills for the reason stated above and granting of MPS's waiver request is consistent with the intent of Chapter 309.

MPS has not demonstrated "good cause" for requesting a waiver of Chapter 309 § 2 for rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes. MPS has, however, demonstrated "good cause," for a partial waiver of Chapter 309 § 5(B)(1) that requires illustrative supply and delivery "rates" be stated on rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes for the reason stated above.

The residential and commercial (rate C) sample bills submitted are in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 309 §5, with the exception of the location of the informational statement. The sample bill submitted for demand customers (rates ES, EST, EP, EPT,ST and HT) is not in compliance with Chapter 309 §5 because the bill does not display separate illustrative rates and charges for electricity supply service and electricity delivery service. Maine Public Service Company has, however, agreed to display separate illustrative rates and charges for electricity supply and electricity delivery service, as well as the total charges for electricity service on the first page of its bills to demand customers (Rates ES, EST, EP, EPT,ST and HT) as required by Chapter 309 §5(A).

Accordingly, it is

O R D E R E D

1) That MPS's request for an exemption of Chapter 309 § 5(B)(2) for all bills is granted;

2) That MPS will include a separate insert with each bill provided to customers from January 1, 1999 through February 29, 2000, that contains the informational statement required by Chapter 309 § 5(A)(2) enclosed by a border that contains no other information;

3) That MPS will locate a message in bold lettering on the bill directing the customer's attention to the insert containing the information statement;

4) That MPS's request for an exemption of Chapter 309 § 2 for rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes is denied;

5) That a waiver of the language contained in Chapter 309 § 5(B)(1) that requires illustrative supply and delivery "rates" be stated on bills is granted for rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes;

6) That MPS state the charges for supply service and delivery service, as well as the total amount of the bill, on rate C customer bills containing pro rata rate changes;

7) That MPS will display separate illustrative rates and charges for electricity supply and electricity delivery services, as well as the total amount for electricity services, on bills provided to its demand customers (rates ES, EST, EP, EPT, ST and HT); and

8) That MPS's sample bills submitted for residential, commercial (rate C) customers, and demand customers (rates ES, EST, EP, EPT, ST and HT) are hereby approved with the above conditions.

Dated at Augusta Maine, this 15th day of October, 1998.

BY ORDER OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE CONSUMER ASSISTANCE DIVISION

Matthew F. Thayer